



Runge Conservation Nature Center

Habitat Happenings

May and June 2005

What About Bob?

by Kathy Cavender



What is it about the bobwhite quail that is so provocative? How can such a little bird command so much attention? While pondering these questions, I began to realize that the bobwhite quail strikes the heart strings of people in different ways. For me, it is the sound of the bobwhite quail that sends a rush of excitement through my veins. I grew up in the country and often heard the familiar bob WHITE call. I don't hear it much anymore and that makes me sad. Some folks love the thrill of the hunt. Hunting quail requires quick reflexes and an accurate aim and can provide hours of fun in the outdoors. Bird watchers seek the challenge of not only hearing the bird but seeing it in its natural habitat. Conservationists are interested in the bobwhite quail because this bird signifies a diverse habitat and the health of many other plants and animals.

Quail numbers in Missouri have been declining rapidly over the past couple of

decades. The main reason for this sharp decline is the deterioration of good quail habitat. Quail need grasslands for nesting and roosting, seed-producing plants for food, brambles and shrubs for cover, and bare ground for dusting and easy mobility. Much of our land has been converted to fescue which is detrimental to quail. Native warm season grasses, on the other hand, are great for quail. Indian grass, big bluestem, and other prairie grasses are "bunch" grasses meaning that they grow in clumps. This growth pattern allows easy access for quail to move around and it allows for a large variety of plants that quail use for food.

Habitat that supports quail is important for a variety of other birds, as well. Many of these birds, including Bell's vireo, dickcissel, and loggerhead shrike are also showing drastic population declines. Education and habitat improvement are key components to restoring quail and other grassland species. By focusing on quail, we help biodiversity and many other birds get a foothold toward a secure future.

Look for interesting facts about the bobwhite quail as you read this edition of *Habitat Happenings*. This bird truly is worthy of our attention and it is up to us to bring the bobwhite quail back to the Missouri landscape.



Volunteer News

Volunteer Appreciation Week April 17 - 23

The 2005 theme is “**Inspire By Example.**” It truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help, as well as to inspire others to serve!



In 2004, Runge Volunteer Naturalists donated over 7,500 hours of their time, helping with programs, special events, off-site exhibits, and various nature center activities. Thanks, Runge Volunteers! We appreciate you!



Lobby Exhibits

May—Communicating the Majesty of the Natural World

A William Woods University

Mentor/Mentee Exhibit

By Professor Terry Martin and students Sarah Williams and Holly Dirnberger



by Sarah Williams

This art exhibit reflects exploration in a variety of media. The goal is to match certain media and methods with the diversity of wildlife and nature. The art pieces endeavor to provide encouragement and stimulation for people interested in art and nature. The creative work includes watercolor, acrylic, oil, pastel (chalk), and collage.

June—Junior Duck Stamp Awards

We are proud to display the winning artwork from Missouri's Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Visit the nature center anytime during June to see the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable Mention entries from this contest.

Did You Know?



Quail groups called coveys are like the spokes of a wheel, each bird positioning itself with its tail towards the center of the wheel.



Conservation Kids' Club

Welcome to Conservation Kids' Club, a fun club created for kids 6 through 13 years old who love to explore nature and learn about wildlife. Come to our meeting and we'll sign you up. No reservations required to attend.

Bug Fest!

Tuesday, May 17 — 6:00-7:30PM

Pollywogs (Ages 6 through 8) and Bullfrogs (Ages 9 through 13) combine for this event.

Learn about these curious creatures from a real entomologist (bug expert), Mr. Paul Calvert. Go buggy over insect activities! Fly around to different stations to learn what's buzzing with insects.

All About Bob (Bobwhite Quail, that is!)

Tuesday, June 21 — 6:30-8:00PM

Pollywogs (Ages 6 through 8) and Bullfrogs (Ages 9 through 13) combine for this event.

What does Bob eat? Where does Bob live? Why does Bob make a covey? Come and have fun learning all about the Northern Bobwhite, our native quail that whistles its name . . . bob WHITE! See a real bird dog in action. Try your hand at a hunting simulator, and whistle to imitate Bob's famous call. It's all about Bob! (Bobwhite Quail, that is!)

Hey, Parents!

While big brother/sister attends Conservation Kids' Club, your preschooler (3 through 5 years of age) can be involved in a program at the same time. A preschool program will be available for siblings of Conservation Kids' Club members on Tuesday, May 17, 6:00PM and June 21, 6:30PM. No reservations required.

*Dear Conservation Kids,
It has been a blast to learn with you at Conservation Kids' Club over the last 11 years! We have so many cool memories of our adventures together. We have explored prairies, watched eagles, caught frogs, and cleaned up Wears Creek. We remember some of you landing your first fish, taking amazing wildlife pictures, snorkeling in a clear water stream, and shuffling bravely through a lantern-lit cave.*

Now, it's time for George and me to set off on a new adventure of our own. We will definitely miss you and our time together. Be sure to keep exploring and enjoying our wonderful world at Conservation Kids' Club. Bubba and friends have got some exciting plans in store for you!

*Naturally,
Jan & George Syrgos*

Get Out And Explore!

**National
Trails Day**
June 4

**Free
Fishing Days**
June 11 & 12

Runge Hiking Club
(see calendar of events for program description)
May 21-Graham Cave State Park
June 18-Bennett Spring

Runge Conservation Nature Center is located in western Jefferson City. From U.S. 50, exit on Highway 179. Travel north for 1/4 mile to our entrance on the left. The Nature Center is open Monday through Saturday 8:00AM to 5:00PM and Noon to 5:00PM on Sundays. No admission fee. 573/526-5544.



Habitat Happenings

Runge Conservation Nature Center
Missouri Department of Conservation
P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 64102

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Jefferson City Missouri
Permit No. 274

May Events at Runge

To make a reservation, call **after 8:00AM on May 1st** to register for these programs (573/526-5544.) If you must cancel, please call as soon as possible so someone on the waiting list can attend. Thank you.

Walk and Talks

Every Tuesday & Thursday
Time: 4:30-5:00PM
Ages: Adults

We'll walk out and talk out the day's stress on Runge's outer trail. We'll take mental notes of the changes in nature. We'll take note of the subtle changes in ourselves. Join a Volunteer Naturalist for a health walk in transition from work to home. No reservations required.

1 Sunday

Through Their Eyes—A Guided Hike

Time: 2:00-3:00PM
Ages: Adults

This will be a guided hike on the outer loop of Runge's trails. We will take a look at the natural world in ways you may not have thought of before. Reservations required.

7 Saturday

American Iris Society Display

Time: Noon-4:00PM
Ages: All

Come get a breath of spring by viewing locally grown irises that will be on display and judged by AIS judges. Learn about different species of native and non-native irises in a presentation at 1:00PM. No reservations required.

18 Wednesday

Beginning Map and Compass

Time: 6:00-7:30PM
Ages: All

What is a topo map? How do you navigate with a compass? Learn the basics of using a map and compass during this workshop. Bring your compass or use one of ours and be prepared to go outside. Reservations required.

19 Thursday

Beginning Map and Compass

Time: 6:00-7:30PM
Ages: All









See May 18 for description.

21 Saturday

Runge Hiking Club

Time: 8:00AM-4:00PM
Ages: 18 years and older

See splendid sights! Learn about our wondrous state! Come join novice and experienced day hikers alike as we strap on our boots and go! Each month, we'll meet at the nature center, car pool to one of Missouri's choice hiking spots, and hike one or two of the best trails. A volunteer naturalist will lead the hikes and point out highlights as we go.

This month, the Hiking Club returns to **Graham Cave State Park** to see if we can add to our list of 49 blooming wildflowers and trees from the area. We'll hike two trails, the **Loutre River Trail** (1.5 miles   ) and the **Indian Glade Trail** (2.25 miles     ) , which takes us on the roof of an elegantly arching shelter cave. We'll also see undercut sandstone ledges, small glades, wet-weather waterfalls, and the Pirate's Plank. Bring your lunch, water, hiking boots or comfortable shoes, and come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

22 Sunday

The Big Mouthed Frog – A Puppet Show

Time: 1:00PM
Ages: Families

Quail and skunk eat different things. Cardinal doesn't eat the same food as Snake. This is a problem for Big Mouthed Frog, who isn't sure what she's supposed to eat. The fun begins as Runge puppeteers show how each animal is adapted to eat a particular kind of food. See if Frog finds something to quiet her rumbly tummy. No reservations required.

Nature Shop News

May/June featured item



20% OFF

Butterflies and Moths of Missouri

This popular guide to butterflies and moths in Missouri includes 833 color photos and descriptions of 324 species. Range, habits, size, and status of each are included in the 385 pages. Discounted price: \$11.20 plus tax. Heritage card discount does not apply.

Trail rating system for the trails advertised for the Runge Hiking Club.



-Easiest trail—flat terrain with no obstructions (like the Katy Trail)



-Slight inclines and/or few obstructions (gravel, few rocks)



-Moderate inclines and/or occasional rocks or roots



-Occasional significant inclines and/or rocks or roots



-Most difficult—significant inclines, obstructions, and/or loose rocks

Habitat Happenings

For the Little Ones

Babes In The Woods

Birth through 2 years of age

Tuesday, May 17 – 10:00AM

Saturday, May 28 – 10:00AM

Little Acorns

3 through 6 years of age

Tuesday, May 10 – 6:00PM

Saturday, May 14 – 10:00AM

Wednesday, May 18 – 1:00PM

Friday, May 20 – 11:00AM

Tuesday, May 24 – 10:00AM

Friday, May 27 – 11:00AM

SNUGS—that's short for slugs and snails!

A silvery trail is left by a slow moving snail. A slippery slug is slimier than a bug. Slip into the small world of these fascinating creatures this month. Reservations required.

Scout Packs Available

Scout leaders, you can now check out packs to work on a badge. Make your reservation with Runge Nature Center at 573/526-5544.

Wolf Cub Elective #13 - *Birds*

Cub Scout Achievement #5 - *Sharing Your World With Wildlife*

Naturalist & Forester Pack (This pack contains activities that meet requirements of both the Naturalist and Forester badges.)

Brownie Try-It - *Animals*

Brownie Try-It - *Plants*

Lewis and Clark Trunks Available

Runge Nature Center has Lewis and Clark Educational Resource Trunks available for two-week check-outs. These trunks will give students a chance to handle tools and materials similar to those the expedition carried. Students will discover the importance of natural resources to the westward expansion and compare them to those of today. Lesson plans are included. To reserve a trunk, call Runge Nature Center at 573/526-5544.

Hunter Education Courses

Do you need to take the hunter education course and don't know where to look? Hunter education courses are now posted on the internet at **www.missouriconservation.org**. From here select *Hunting & Trapping* then *Hunter Ed. Courses* to locate a course near you.



Quail take practically all their food within 8 inches of the ground.

June Events at Runge

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Every Tuesday & Thursday

Time: 4:30-5:00PM

Ages: Adults

We'll walk out and talk out the day's stress on Runge's outer trail. We'll take mental notes of the changes in nature. We'll take note of the subtle changes in ourselves. Join a Volunteer Naturalist for a health walk in transition from work to home. No reservations required.

3 Friday

Family Fishing

Time: 6:00-8:00PM

Ages: All (Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

Hang up your "Gone Fishing" sign and join us for some good old-fashion fishin'! We'll provide poles, tackle, and bait (or bring your own.) This is catch-and-release fishing, and folks ages 16-65 will need a current Missouri fishing license. Meet at Runge and we will car pool or walk to the fishing pond. Reservations required.



4 Saturday

Family Fishing

Time: 9:00-11:00AM

Ages: All (Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

See June 3 for description.

11 Saturday

Big Mouthed Frog Puppet Show

Time: 1:00PM

Ages: Families


Quail and skunk eat different things. Cardinal doesn't eat the same food as Snake. This is a problem for Big Mouthed Frog, who isn't sure what she's supposed to eat. The fun begins as Runge puppeteers show how each animal is adapted to eat a particular kind of food. See if Frog finds something to quiet her rumbly tummy. No reservations required.

18 Saturday

Runge Hiking Club

Time: 8:00AM-5:00PM

Ages: 18 years and older

This month, we'll travel to one of our most popular state parks—**Bennett Spring**. We won't be in search of trout, though. We'll hike the Natural Tunnel Trail (7.5 miles ) to find a 296-foot-long S-Shaped tunnel—one of the largest, most beautiful (and largely unknown) natural tunnels in the state. Bring a small pack, your lunch, water, and hiking boots or comfortable shoes. We will eat lunch on the trail. Bring a flashlight if you want to explore inside the tunnel. Also, come dressed for the weather. Reservations required.

Habitat Happenings

For the Little Ones

Babes In The Woods

Birth through 2 years of age

Thursday, June 9 – 11:00AM

Friday, June 17 – 10:00AM

Little Acorns

3 through 6 years of age

Tuesday, June 7 – 10:00AM

Saturday, June 11 – 10:00AM

Tuesday, June 14 – 6:00PM

Wednesday, June 15 – 1:00PM

Thursday, June 23 – 11:00AM

Friday, June 24 – 11:00AM

Fish is Fish

"... and fish is fish and that's that!"

So writes Leo Lionni in his classic book, *Fish Is Fish*.

They are not frogs. They are not birds.

Fish is fish and we will explore their watery world this month. Reservations required.



Waterfowl Decoy Workshop

Saturday, June 4

9:00AM - 5:00PM

Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area and Charles A. Green Conservation Area

Learn how to make a cork body duck decoy at this fun and informative workshop. We'll provide you with the materials and instructions to get you started making your own decoys. We recommend that those attending the workshop bring a shop apron, 80 to 160 grit sand paper, eye protection, and a wood rasp or "sure form" tool if you have one.

We'll meet at the pool #5 parking lot at Eagle Bluffs Conservation Area at 9:00AM to visit with members of the Missouri Waterfowl Association. Participants will get a chance to see a variety of manufactured and handcrafted duck boats, camouflage schemes, and riggings.

At 10:00AM, we'll move to the Charles A. Green Conservation Area to begin the decoy workshop.

This program is free and open to those who make a reservation. Call 573/884-6861 no later than May 27th to attend this workshop. Attendance is limited to 25, so call early!



Quail Facts

■The majority of Missouri's quail begin nesting in May.

■Biologists estimate that there were around 13 million quail statewide during the heyday of quail hunting in the late 1960's.

■Quail are near the bottom of the food chain.

■Dusting is an important habit for quail and involves immersing their breasts in dust and throwing dust across their back with their beaks and feet.

■Dusting helps keep feathers healthy and gets rid of insect parasites.

■Whistle counts in June help biologists get an idea of how many quail survived the winter.

■Quail consume insects when they are young and seeds and green shoots as adults.

■Quail nests may contain 12-15 cream-colored eggs that hatch in 23-24 days.

■Because quail chicks are fuzzy, yellowish, and very tiny, they resemble bumble bees.



Free Fishing

June
11 & 12



No fishing permit is required on these two days. Experience the joy of fishing!